



E-NEWSLETTER

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Members of the Idaho Rural Water Association recently met with Mike in Washington, D.C. Pictured are (L to R): Jerry Giesbrecht, city of American Falls; Joe Qualls, city of Weiser; Mike Simpson; Tim Closson, Kootenai-Ponderay; Don Munkers, IRWA; and Ray Hyde, city of Hailey.

Message from Mike

As I write this to you, our nation is at war. I ask for your prayers for the men and women who are serving our country in the Middle East. I'd encourage you to do all you can to show your support for these brave soldiers. In this issue, you'll find examples of what you can do to show your support. You'll also find an article from my colleague Congressman Tim Murphy on how to explain the war to your children. I hope you'll find these resources helpful.

What's Up this Week

Wednesday

Simpson will attend an Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on the Army Corps of Engineers at 2362B Rayburn at 10 a.m. Simpson will also attend a Veterans and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee on the Department of Veterans Affairs at 2359 Rayburn. The featured witness will be Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

Thursday

Simpson will spearhead a meeting of the House Nuclear-Cleanup Caucus from 9 to 10 a.m. in SC-6. Members of Congress with Department of Energy sites participate in this caucus. Simpson will give opening remarks and lead discussion.

Simpson will attend a Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations Subcommittee focusing on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The hearing begins at 10:15 a.m. at 2358 Rayburn.

The House is scheduled to vote on H.R. 1104, the Child Abduction Prevention Act.

Friday

The House is not in session.

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Weekly Website

What do you know about Iraq? This website, sponsored by the CIA, details every aspect of the country of Iraq.

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/iz.html>

Federal Facts

More than 35 nations across the world are participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Quote of the Week

“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country, but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheaply we esteem to lightly; it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.”

— Thomas Paine, “The Crisis”

Simpson, Otter Offer Ways to Support Our Troops

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In response to constituents inquiring as to what they can do to support the US Military, Congressmen Mike Simpson and C.L. “Butch” Otter issued the following suggestions.

Because of the current security and logistical situation, the Department of Defense recommends against sending mail or packages directly to troops, unless you are a relative. However, the troops still need our support. E-mail is a great way to send messages. If you would like to send a message to the troops, please e-mail them through www.operationdearabby.net. You can also access this website through Congressman Simpson’s website at www.house.gov/simpson and click on the “Write a Member of the Armed Services” link or through Congressman Otter’s webpage at www.house.gov/otter and click on the “Operation Enduring Support” link.

The Department of Defense offers a virtual “thank-you” note to our military. To sign the virtual thank you note, go to www.defendamerica.mil/nmam.html.

The USO (United Service Organizations) specializes in supporting our troops. It is offering a unique way for individuals and corporations to let our nation’s defenders know we haven’t forgotten them. “Operation USO Care Package,” initiated by the USO of Metropolitan Washington (USO-Metro), enables individuals to financially support care packages that will be delivered to service members en route to overseas destinations. A contribution of \$25 will purchase one Care Package. Because of heightened security, individuals can no longer send letters and packages to “Any Service Member.” Operation USO Care Package is approved by the Department of Defense, and provides a safe, easy way for individuals and corporations to show their prayers and thoughts are with our service members. To donate, contact: USO World Headquarters, P.O. Box 70264, Washington, DC 20024. You can also visit their website at www.uso.org.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars sponsors “Operation Uplink.” This unique program keeps military personnel and hospitalized veterans in touch with their families and loved ones by providing them with a free phone card. It’s very expensive for our military to call home when they are deployed overseas. Using contributions from supporters, the VFW through Operation Uplink purchases phone cards and distributes them to servicemen and women who are separated from those they care about. To learn more go to www.operationuplink.org/.

Simpson Kicks Off Congressional Art Contest

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Idaho high school students are encouraged to put their artistic talents to the drawing board and enter the 21st annual Congressional Arts competition, Congressman Mike Simpson announced today.

The winning picture will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol. The student, their parents, and the winner's art teacher, will be flown to Washington, D.C. courtesy of Southwest Airlines for a star-studded unveiling ceremony in June.

"This is an exciting opportunity for Idaho's youth. This is the only contest sponsored by Congress. The art is displayed in the U.S. Capitol and is seen by thousands of tourists, government employees and members of Congress. As an artist myself, I'm hopeful students will take advantage of this exciting opportunity and submit their best work," Simpson said.

The theme for the contest is "Trails of Idaho." The artwork can be a painting (oil, acrylic, etc.), drawing, watercolor, pastels, collage, photographs, or print (lithograph, silk-screen, etc.), or computer generated art. Entries do not need to be framed. However, once the winner is chosen that artwork will need to be framed for display in the Capitol. Artwork must not exceed the 32 x 32 size requirement set by the Architect of the Capitol. These specifications include the frame.

Artwork submitted to any of the Congressman's four district offices in Boise, Idaho Falls, Pocatello or Twin Falls by May 2 will be considered. The Eagle Rock Art Museum in Idaho Falls will judge the entries. Beginning May 12, all of the entries will be on display at the museum at 300 South Capital Avenue in Idaho Falls. The winning artwork will be sent to Washington, D.C. and will also be displayed on Simpson's webpage. To see last year's winner go to <http://www.house.gov/simpson/students-artwinners.htm>.

For more information, contact Simpson's Education Outreach Coordinator Julie Tensen at 208-334-1953.

Summer Internships Available in Simpson D.C. Office

WASHINGTON, D.C. - College students interested in interning for Congressman Mike Simpson in Washington, D.C. are encouraged to apply for upcoming summer internships.

Interns can also work in Simpson's district offices in Boise, Idaho Falls, Pocatello and Twin Falls. Applications must be received by April 15, 2003.

"Interning in a congressional office can be a life changing experience. You'll get a front seat to see how government operates and it's a great stepping-stone for your career. In fact, many of my staffers did internships on Capitol Hill during college," Simpson said.

Internships last between two and three months. Interns work with legislative staff on constituent correspondence and general office work. Offices will work with students to obtain college credit.

For more information and application materials, please call Amy Allen at Simpson's Washington, D.C. office at 202-225-5531. Applications can be obtained at Simpson's homepage at <http://www.house.gov/simpson>. Due to irradiation of mail, correspondence is delivered four to six weeks late, so please fax the application to Simpson's D.C. office at 202-225-8216.

How Parents and Children Cope with War, Terrorism

by Congressman Tim Murphy (R-PA), Ph.D.

As we face the threat of terrorism and war, we find our stress levels rising. You cannot turn on the TV, pick up a newspaper or listen to the radio without hearing or seeing vivid images that increase our concerns. When the government elevates the threat level, our worries also elevate.

One of the goals of terrorists, in fact, is to build anxiety levels to the point that they disrupt our everyday lives. Fears impact our productivity and concentration as we become preoccupied with worry rather than work. Trouble sleeping, nervousness, short tempers, and sadness are some of the many reactions to stress adults may experience. As tough as it is on adults, it's harder on children. As a parent, you are the most important person in your children's life to help them identify and cope with their stress during this very difficult time. You can take the following steps to help your family deal with the worries about terrorism and war: listen to a child's concerns, limit the news, look to their needs and learn what to do.

LISTEN TO A CHILD'S CONCERNS

If you don't know what's on your child's mind, ask. Younger children may have trouble putting their feelings into words, and some teenagers may avoid talking with parents because they want to appear mature enough to handle it on their own. In both cases, it is important to get them to talk anyway. When children don't share, watch for symptoms indicating they are worried. These signs may include:

Changes in personality — A quiet child may become more active. An active child may get quieter. A social child may want to be left alone. Some children will hover closer to parents, and some cling and seek more physical contact and affection. Also watch for changes in appetite (eating less or eating more) and sleep (more restless sleep or increasing need for sleep).

Changes in mood — Sadness, more anger, or fighting with siblings and parents can all indicate increased anxiety. Anger never exists without some emotional trigger, including fear or excessive worry.

Changes in communication — Teens spend more time talking with friends about the issues, especially on the phone or via the Internet. Although it's good for them to be supportive of each other, the facts are essential. False rumors spread quickly and affect this group already so influenced by peers. Make sure you ask what information they are sharing so you can offer facts and reassurance.

LIMIT THE NEWS

After the September 11th attacks, many families left the TV or radio news on for hours in the background. We listened because we wanted to be informed in the hope that we could better understand what was so incomprehensible. Later, we discovered that children were hearing much of the news and feeling overwhelmed by what they heard.

Younger children are especially vulnerable if they don't understand the threats may be far away. When they hear about bombings and see soldiers and citizens putting on gas masks, they may think this is down the street, not across the world. Even when reassured the threats and battles are "far away" or "won't happen here," they still notice parents' emotions when hearing discussions about war and terrorist attacks and feel frightened.

Get the news you need and then turn it off. If children are playing nearby, the repetitive stories and images may affect them without you even realizing it. Wait until they are out of the room. Sometimes, young children fail to realize that what is re-broadcast happened hours or days ago. They may think it's actually happening every half hour or whenever they see it.

Ask if children have any questions. Decide how much information they can handle for their ages and maturity. Often, children require much smaller bits of information, just enough to satisfy their curiosity, compared to our quest for as much as we can digest.

LOOK TO THEIR NEEDS

Threats and worries can distract us. Routines get disrupted, appointments forgotten, and the simple but important things get overlooked. Keeping family routines gives all of us a sense of stability and predictability to help weather stress. For children:

Let them go to school, stay on sports teams, eat meals with the family, shop, complete homework, do chores and stick to normal bedtimes.

Maintain standards for doing a good job, especially for homework and chores. Feelings of mastery and control reduce their stress.

Remind them they will be cared for. Reassure them they are safe and protected. Remember, children are great imitators. If you're calm, they likely will be calm, too.

Give comfort and inspiration. Reading stories or talking about heroes and mentors helps children learn strength and courage from others. Our history is filled with stories of ordinary people who, when called upon, did extraordinary things. Even make-believe characters in storybooks or real heroes with teens inspire us. Ask your local librarian for book recommendations.

For adults:

Eat right, get enough rest, and look after your own needs. The same goes for exercise. Keep up your own fitness routines as working out reduces the body's stress levels. Share your worries with a friend. Allow yourself to laugh or even cry, if you must. A sense of humor is a great asset.

Keep things in perspective by remembering that your chances of being harmed in an ordinary accident far exceed any chance of your harm through a terrorist strike. All of these steps help you to remain calm and better equipped to help yourself and your children during stressful times.

If stress and worry remain, consult your physician or a therapist. Prolonged anxiety can take its toll on the body and mind. You should feel free to speak with the pediatrician or a child therapist if you see signs of prolonged stress in your son or daughter.

LEARN WHAT TO DO

When handling a threatening situation, it's normal to feel stressed. The less control you feel, the higher your stress level. Then, you might not deal with real problems as effectively. With proper information and preparation, you take back some of those things that were previously out of your control. It really can make you feel better equipped to go about living each day.

Get the facts about what threats may exist and what you should do. The better informed you are, the better you deal with problems. Gather information from the Homeland Security Web site www.dhs.gov or www.ready.gov to better understand chemical and biological weapons.

Develop a plan. Just as you should have for any weather or fire emergency, you should have a plan in case of terrorist attack. Practice ways to get to a safe place, either remaining in the house in case of a weather emergency or getting out in case of a fire. There are three important questions for which you and your children should have answers, especially in the case that you are separated during an emergency:

Where do I go? Have a safe location (or locations) where everybody in your family knows to meet in the case of an emergency. Depending on what type of an emergency this is, it might be your home, a neighbor's home, or even your basement. But make sure that everybody in your family knows where to go in each situation. If you are caught in traffic or unable to get home right away, arrange a safe place for your child to meet you.

What do I do? Each emergency has different steps to take to avoid harm and protect your family. Local fire departments often hold training exercises to teach children what to do in an emergency. Go over with your children simple, easy steps to follow for a variety of emergency scenarios.

Who do I call? Make sure each member of your family has a simple list of phone numbers to call in case of emergency. Remember to include a list of several numbers, in case phone lines or cell phone towers in certain areas are not functioning. For example, the World Trade Center housed many of the cell phone towers for the New York City area. That, coupled with a drastic increase in calls to New York City, made cell phones useless for most of the day.

Be prepared with the right supplies at home. Every home should have basic emergency supplies such as water, canned food, flashlights, batteries, blankets, and a fire extinguisher.

Let your child's school know how to reach you in an emergency, and be sure that you understand your school's plan for your child's safety while there. Arrange a backup plan if your child ends up at home alone during an emergency.

Idaho History Quiz Question:

Last week's answer was Franklin, Idaho, which borders Utah and was settled in 1860. This week's question is: What is Idaho's oldest building? Be the first to e-mail back and be featured in next week's newsletter!